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CURRENT SCHOOL CURRICULUM ISSUES: A CASE OF STUDENT-TEACHER PREPARATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

The current curriculum change in Indonesia school has direct impact on the schools, students, teachers, as well as the student teachers. This paper analyses the problems found in the student teachers' preparation in planning the learning activities in a form of teaching documents. Therefore, the data being analyzed are teaching preparation documents produced by the student teachers before they went for the internship program in schools. The data were from the class documents in the Learning Program Design class and Micro Teaching class during February 2015 – June 2016. The analysis found that the problems are related to the translation from the basic competence into the indicator of achievement and the assessment planning. In addition, they also had difficulties in planning the teaching scenario using the scientific approach. Some solutions are proposed in this paper.

Keywords: student teachers, curriculum, core competence, basic competence, assessment, scientific method

Introduction

After its independence in 1945, Indonesia has undergone several changes in the school curriculum. Figure 1 summarizes the curricula used in schools after the independence. Barton, Garvis and Ryan (2014) explain that in response to the curriculum change, teachers need to ensure that the needs of their students, their school and their communities are being met. This is not an easy process for educators especially when they deal with learners from different background, which, among others, are different background of cultures, knowledge, beliefs of the purpose of learning, and learning styles. The changes of curriculum in Indonesia have affected to what happened in the school. Therefore, the learning process, the teaching documents produced by the teachers also change based on the curriculum's requirements.

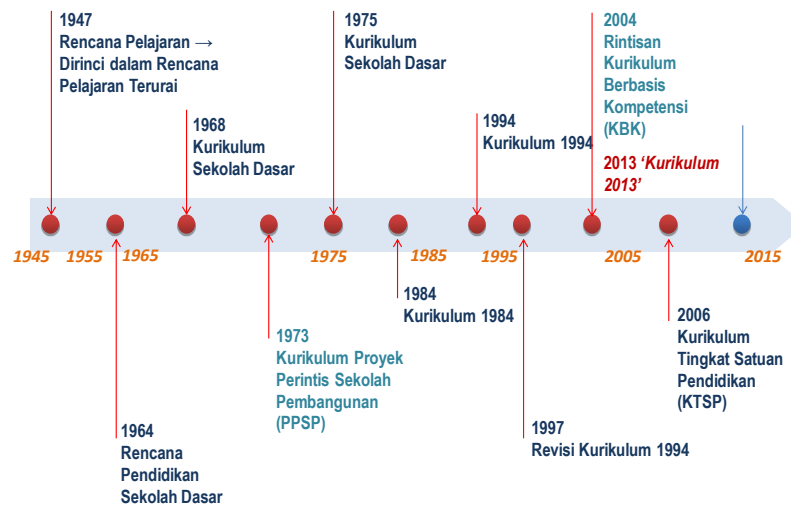


Figure 1. School Curricula Implemented in Indonesia after the Independence Day

Mulyasa (in PJJ PGSD module, accessed from <http://pjjpgsd.dikti.go.id>) mentioned that the curriculum changes are related to the following aspects.

1. Goals; the goals are related to society view of life and nation vision.
2. Content and structure; the changes are related to the contents of the school subjects, the students' activities, the learning approach.
3. Curriculum strategy; the changes are related to the implementation of the curriculum, whether there is a necessary change in the teaching and learning concept used, in the administration system, in the guidance and counselling, in the learning assessment.
4. Curriculum facilities; the changes are related to facilities and human resources needed.
5. Curriculum evaluation system; the changes involve the appropriate way to measure the effectiveness of the curriculum.

The education review team (OECD/Asian Development Bank, 2015) underlines that the most significant period of Indonesia's curriculum change was in 2004. In that year, there were two important changes in Indonesia's curriculum which are in line with "international best practice" (2015, p. 268). The first change was the shift from the content-based curricula to competency-based curricula. The second change was the decentralization of curriculum implementation.

The 2013 is based on the foundation of the 2004 curriculum and 2006 curriculum. Based on the education review team's finding, the specific focus of the curriculum is "an optimal balance between the development of cognitive skills, particularly those of critical thinking and problem solving, and development of student character and behavior" (OECD/Asian Development Bank, 2015, p. 269). In addition, the curriculum also focuses more on religious instruction and character education. The previous curriculum has Competency standard as the reference when teaching. And this Competency Standard is divided into several Basic Competences. The current curriculum has the core competency as the reference. The Core Competencies covers 4 aspects; core

competency number 1 is spiritual attitude, core competency number 2 is social attitude, core competency number 3 is knowledge and core competency number 4 is skills.

Then each of the lesson plan, teachers need to incorporate all the core competencies when picking one basic competence. In addition, they have to set assessment to ensure that the pupils have achieved the goal of the learning. Therefore, teachers have to set up the indicators of achievement as the basis of learning assessment. The first thing to do is that they need to take the Core competencies (4 core competencies) and choose the suitable basic competences. After that teachers need to make the indicators of learning achievement. The indicators should be measurable. After planning the learning process, the teachers need to plan the assessment also. The assessment method in the newest curriculum emphasizes the authentic assessment. Therefore, the assessments may cover, among others, portfolio assessment, open questions, and process assessments.

Table 1 shows the implementation of curriculum in the hand of the teachers, especially for English teachers.

Table 1. Differences of the Aspects of Planning Done by the Teachers of English

2006 Curriculum	2013 Curriculum
Competence standard	Core Competencies (CC):
Basic Competence	1. CC 1 (Spiritual attitude)
1. For Listening	2. CC 2 (Social attitude)
2. For Speaking	3. CC 3 (Cognitive aspect)
3. For Reading (comprehending the text and analysing the text by breaking it down into language elements and rhetorical steps)	4. CC 4 (Skills aspect)
4. For Writing	Basic Competence
Indicators of Achievement	Indicators of Achievement
Learning Goals	Learning Goals
Methods, Media	Methods, Media
Teaching Scenario with EEC	Teaching Scenario with Scientific Approach
Assessment methods, examples of test items, and rubric for assessing	Assessment methods, examples of test items, and rubric for assessing

The current curriculum, curriculum 2013, puts forward the implementation of scientific approach in the teaching process in all subjects taught in schools. In the teaching activities where scientific approach is implemented, the teachers have to focus on three aspect of learning, namely cognitive, affective and psycho motoric. Figure 2 describes the three aspects of learning.

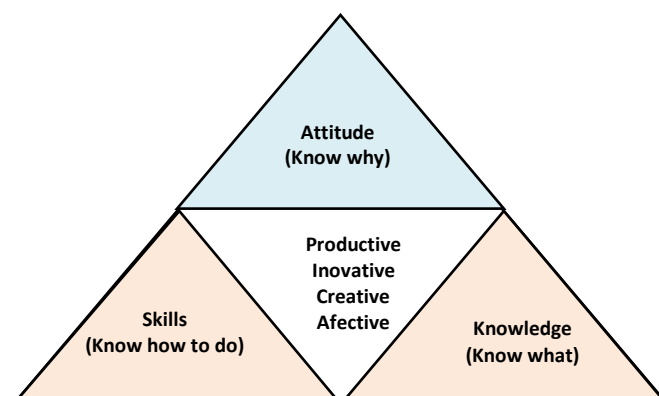


Figure 2. The incorporation of three aspects of learning in the learning process
(translated from Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2013b)

The previous learning approach followed the EEC (elaboration, exploration, and confirmation) cycle. The 2013 curriculum's learning approach is scientific approach, which has the following stages: observation, questioning, associating, experimenting, and networking.

This curriculum is not implemented in all schools at the same time. The government has a policy to have a "smooth" transition from 2006 curriculum to 2013 curriculum. So there were some stages set by the government to apply the curriculum change. In 2012 there were the trainings conducted for schools; for the principals, for the teachers. In the academic year of 2013/2014, there are only some schools appointed to implement the curriculum, and other schools continued doing the preparation. The new curriculum was only implemented in the 1st grade, 4th grade, 7th grade, and the 10th grade. In 2014/2015, the new curriculum is implemented in the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th, 7th, 8th, 10th, and 11th grade. And in 2015/2016, all grade levels used the new curriculum. And in 2016/2017, the number of the school appointed to implement the new curriculum was increased.

When the curriculum changes, the direct effect will be seen in school area, namely the work of the principals, the work of the teachers and of course the students. Further impact will be of course in the higher institution which train the future teachers. The higher institution should adapt to the changes and should ensure that the contents of the subjects taught in line with the students' very near future life. Universities with their Teachers' Training and Education Faculty prepare their students to be future teachers. The Teachers' Training and Education Faculty in Indonesia will have an internship program for their students. Internship program is done in schools with the purpose of practicing the teaching skills with the real students in the classroom. Therefore, there should be materials taught to equip the students to go in the internship program. In the English Education Program of university level, one of the relevant materials is school curriculum in the Learning Program Design Class and in the Micro teaching class (Panduan Akademik PBI, 2010).

This paper is going to see **the problems or difficulties faced by the student teachers in the teachers' training faculty in response to the changes in the**

curriculum. Further, it will propose **some solutions to solve those problems or difficulties.** The analysis on this paper is going to use the students' documents obtained in the previous year (January – May 2016) to see the students' problems related to the curriculum changes. The documents are in a form of soft file teaching preparation made by the students.

To avoid different perception on some key terms used in the paper, the following is a brief definition on the key terms.

1. Student teachers

This term refers to students who study in the Teachers' Training and Education Faculty on their semester 6th or above. They go for their internship program to schools in the 7th or 8th semester as student teachers. Therefore, in this paper, the university students who will go to the internship program is labelled as student teachers and the students who will be their subjects in teaching will be labelled as the pupils.

2. Core competency

Core competency is the operationalization of graduate standard. It is the description of main competency which is grouped in the attitude aspect, knowledge aspect, and skill aspects (covering affective, cognitive, and psycho motoric) to be learned by the pupils in certain level and different subjects (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan: 2013a).

3. Indicator of learning achievement

Indicator of learning achievement is expected learning outcome made to see the achievement of the basic competence taught. This is as the basis for learning assessment.

4. Scientific approach

Scientific approach is a learning approach covering observing, questioning, associating, experimenting, and net-working (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan: 2013a).

Findings and Discussion

Problems found in the student teachers' teaching documents

There are some problems found when the student teachers prepare their teaching documents before going for their internship program in school in their semester 7th or 8th. The following are problems (or difficulties) found in their documents.

1. **Formulation of indicators of learning achievement**

The student teachers found to have difficulties in formulating the learning indicators, especially indicators covering all core competencies. The following is an example of a lesson plan made by a student teacher. This lesson plan is for English subject of Junior High school (middle school) of grade 8 semester 1. The topic is "What are you doing?"

The indicator mentioned in Excerpt 1 which is "*siswa dapat mensyukuri kesempatan belajar Bahasa Inggris*" (the students are able to be thankful for the opportunity to learn English lesson) is not different from the Basic Competence. The Basic Competence says "*Mensyukuri kesempatan dapat mempelajari Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa pengantar komunikasi internasional yang diwujudkan*

dalam semangat belajar” (Be thankful for the opportunity of being able to learn English as an international lingua franca expressed in the learning motivation). In fact, the Basic Competence directly says that the thanking action is expressed in the learning motivation. Therefore, it should be one part in the indicator, meaning how a teacher can see the motivation of the pupils.

A. Kompetensi Inti

Core competencies
CC1, CC2, CC3,

KI 1 : Menghargai dan menghayati ajaran agama yang dianutnya

KI 2 : Menghargai dan menghayati perilaku jujur, disiplin, tanggungjawab, peduli (toleransi, gotong royong), santun, percaya diri, dalam berinteraksi secara efektif dengan lingkungan sosial dan alam dalam jangkauan pergaulan dan keberadaannya.

KI 3 : Memahami pengetahuan (faktual, konseptual, dan prosedural) berdasarkan rasa ingin tahunya tentang ilmu pengetahuan, teknologi, seni, budaya terkait fenomena dan kejadian tampak mata.

KI 4 : Mencoba, mengolah, dan menyaji dalam ranah konkret (menggunakan, mengurai, merangkai, memodifikasi, dan membuat) dan ranah abstrak (menulis, membaca, menghitung, menggambar, dan mengarang) sesuai dengan yang dipelajari di sekolah dan sumber lain yang sama dalam sudut pandang/teori.

Basic
Competence

Indicators

B. Kompetensi Dasar

<u>Kompetensi Dasar</u>	<u>Indikator</u>
1.1 Mensyukuri kesempatan dapat mempelajari Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa pengantar komunikasi internasional yang diwujudkan dalam semangat belajar	1.1.1 Siswa dapat mensyukuri kesempatan belajar Bahasa Inggris
2.1 Menunjukkan perilaku santun dan peduli	2.1.1 Siswa mampu menunjukkan

In addition, the indicator found in Excerpt 1, namely **be thankful**, is not measurable and not expressed in a form of what action the pupils have to show. Therefore, it will be difficult for the student teachers to set the assessment for this particular indicator. How can the student teachers assess that the pupils are thankful for the opportunities of studying English?

The requirement for having measurable or an action verb in the indicator is in line with what Gammon mentions (2003). There are some characteristics of indicators of learning based on New Economics Foundation. Indicators of learning should cover AIM, which means that indicators have **Action** focused, **Important**, **Measurable**, and **Simple** (Gammon, 2003: p. 5).

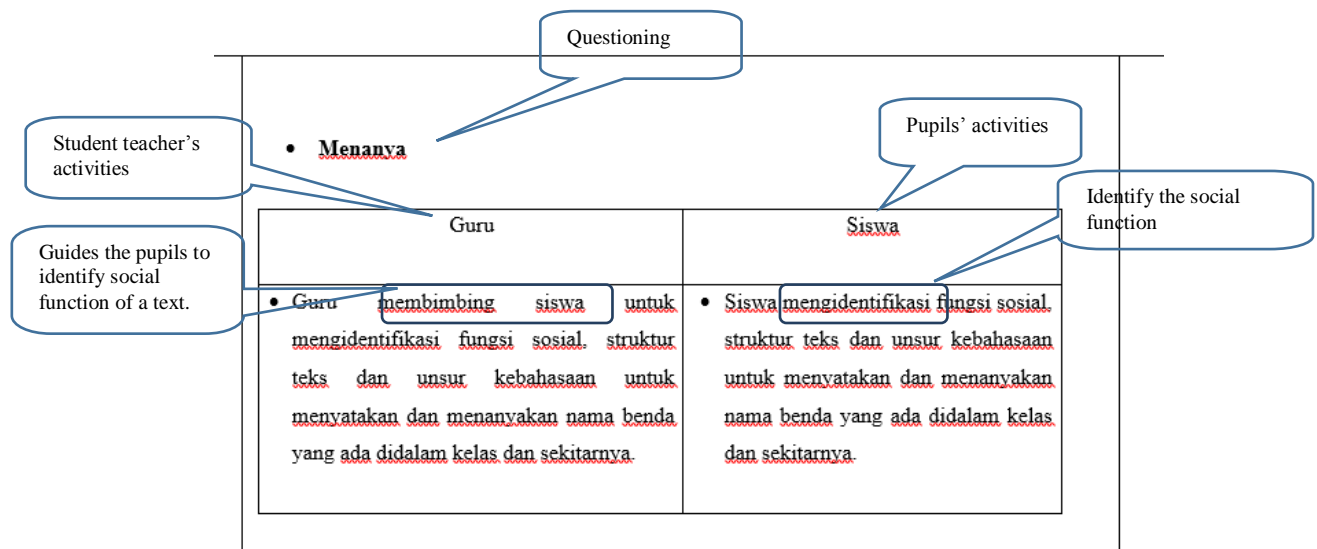
2. Planning the teaching scenario using scientific method

The recommended approach from the government in teaching is scientific approach. Even though this approach is rooted from science and mathematics area, it is worth trying for teachers of other subjects. Harmer (2001: p. 79) mentions that,

What the interested teacher needs to do when confronted with a new method, for example, is to see if and/or how it incorporates theories of language and learning. What procedures does it incorporate? Are they appropriate and effective for the classroom situation that the teacher works with? In the case of techniques

and activities, two questions seem worth asking: are they satisfying for both students and teachers, and do they actually achieve what they set out to achieve?

After analyzing the documents for teaching preparation made by the student teachers, the next problem is related to the activities under the scientific approach used. The approaches used by the student teachers seem to be only copy pasted in the generic stages given by the government. Sometimes it is difficult for the student teachers to make sure that they can really use the scientific approach in their teaching. An example of this is found in Excerpt 2. In her lesson plan, the student teacher mentions that she is going to use the scientific approach in her teaching activities. The teaching scenario that the student teacher made also mentions the scientific approach stages. However, the activities done are not directly related to the stages mentioned in the scenario (see Excerpt 2).



Excerpt 2. The student teacher's teaching scenario

The teaching scenario in Excerpt 2 still shows the domination of teachers in the questioning stage. The excerpt does not show the questioning activities. In fact, it is the pupils who should undergo the process of questioning. The responsibility of the student teacher is to facilitate the process for example by giving the stimulus so that the students can do the questioning process. By doing the questioning process, the pupils are expected to be more critical and to train their creative thinking. Cottrell (2005: viii) mentions that "[critical thinking involves] working out whether we believe what we see or hear; taking steps to find out whether something is likely to be true; arguing our own case if someone doesn't believe us? (in Moon, 2008, p. 35).

3. Planning the assessment methods

Assessment should be related closely to the indicators set at the beginning of the lesson plan. So if the indicators are really measurable, the assessment can be conducted as planned. The problems found in the student teachers' documents concerning the assessments are as follows.

- The student teachers do not have a one-to-one match between the indicator and the assessment methods.

- b. The student teachers do not have certain rubrics for assessing the attitudes for core competence 1 and core competence 2.

Table 2 is summary of an analysis of a student teacher plan for assessing the pupils' learning achievement.

Table 2. Summary of analysis on the student teacher's plan for assessment

Core Competence	Indicator of learning achievement	Assessment	Notes
1	<i>Siswa dapat mensyukuri kesempatan belajar bahasa Inggris</i> (The pupils are able to be thankful for the opportunity to learn English)	Not made	
2	a. <i>Siswa mampu menunjukkan perilaku santun dan peduli dalam berkomunikasi dengan guru dan teman.</i> (The pupils are able to show polite attitude and care in communicating with the teachers and their peers).	Not made	
	b. <i>Siswa mampu menunjukkan perilaku jujur, disiplin, percaya diri, dan bertanggung jawab dalam mengerjakan tugas individu ataupun kelompok.</i> (The pupils are able to show honest, discipline, confident, and responsible attitude in doing the task individually or in group)	Made, but the rubric is not clear mentioning how certain attitude as categorized as honest, discipline, responsible, and confident.	See Excerpt 3

From Table 2, it was found that the student teacher did not make one-to-one match of the indicator and the assessment because some indicators are not assessed (number 1, and 2a). In addition, for assessing the attitude related to honesty, discipline, confidence, and responsibility, this student teacher did not specify the expected action to represent the concurrent attitudes. Therefore, even though there is a rubric for observing the attitude, it is difficult to decide whether certain attitude is present in the pupil's performance. Excerpt 3 is the example of observation rubric made by the student teacher.

Lembar Pengamatan Siswa saat Mengerjakan Lembar Kerja

Kelas :

Hari, Tanggal :

Materi/Tema :

The observation rubrics for assessing the pupils' acti

The observation rubrics for assessing the pupils' activities in doing the task

No.	Nama Peserta Didik	Sikap				Keterangan
		Jujur	Tanggung Jawab	Percaya Diri	Disiplin	

Keterangan skor

4 = selalu konsisten menunjukkan sikap sesuai aspek sikap

3 = sering konsisten menunjukkan sikap sesuai aspek dan kadang-kadang tidak sesuai

2 = kadang-kadang konsisten dan sering tidak sesuai aspek sikap

1 = tidak pernah menunjukkan sikap sesuai aspek sikap

Kurang (K) : apabila memperoleh Skor Akhir: Skor Akhir $\leq 1,33$

Excerpt 3. Observation rubric for assessing the pupils' attitudes

Even though the student teacher still does not provide the detailed assessment criteria, she already realizes that assessment for attitude should be conducted using for example observation rubrics and not a test. In addition, it is done during the process of the learning. It is in line with the authentic assessment concept. Authentic assessment (Paris & Ayres: (1999), pp. 7-8) "collects diverse evidence of students' learning from multiple activities." Calfee & Hiebert, (1990) in Paris and Ayres mention that "Rather than relying on single tests or narrow samples of students' knowledge, authentic assessment involves gathering evidence over time from many different academic activities" (1999: p. 8). Teachers can make rubrics in the assessment to create level of clarity in the learning target, to promote a greater degree of internal locus of control (Gettinger & Kohler, 2006 in Shindler, 2010: pp. 215-216). It will also reduce the students' need to ask questions, increase reliability, provide clarity, and include process assessment aspects (Shindler, 2010: p. 216).

Proposed solutions

The following proposed solutions are for the institution as well as for the student teachers.

a. For the study program/the higher institution

The fact that subjects or classes designed to prepare the student teachers to be ready for the internship school program makes the problems more complicated. There are series of related pedagogical subjects for this programs, namely

Approaches, Methods, and Techniques, Language Teaching Media, Learning Program Design, Language Assessment, and Micro Teaching. It is understandable that most of the time, students cannot relate what they learn in one class to others related classes. That is why when planning the documents in their preparation of the internship program, most of the students missed the whole related picture of planning and assessing. For the institution, it is suggested that the lecturers for the related classes work together to facilitate the student teachers more with integrated understanding and practice related to planning and assessing the learning process for the school pupils. The emphasis can be on the practice of the use of action verbs in the indicators and analyzing whether the indicators of achievement are assessed correctly.

b. For the student teachers

In relation to setting the indicator, planning the teaching scenario, and planning the assessment, the student teachers need to pay attention on the following aspects:

- 1) Indicators should have a measurable verb/action verb. So the student teachers should use the measurable verbs in making the indicators. They can refer to any literature related to measurable verbs in setting the indicators.
- 2) In relation to assessment, the student teachers should compare whether their indicators of learning planned in the lesson plan have a one-to-one match with the assessment they plan at the end of the lesson plan. The next number, number 3) to 6) are related to the problems related to planning the teaching scenario.
- 3) The student teachers need to be more creative in providing media to stimulate the pupils in the observing stage. They can use, among others, related videos, flashcard, story board, and real objects.
- 4) They need to involve the pupils more in the learning to facilitate discovery learning. They can do it, among others, by doing group activities, providing some engaging activities as to stimulate the pupils to explore more.
- 5) Student teachers need to act as facilitators. In this way, they will reduce the dominant role of the teacher in the class. Therefore, when planning the scenario, the student teachers have to write activities to facilitate the student centered class.

In the case of scientific approach used, student teacher can do the following: For example in teaching reading, a teacher can give the example of how questioning can be done. So the teacher can tell what kinds of questions which may arise during reading the texts. This particular example is given by a teacher to her pupils so that the pupils will do the same thing, for example asking themselves what they are missing in their reading activities.

- 6) Last but not least, as novice teachers they have to be willing to explore the teaching style more and be motivated to have reflective teaching as to improve the quality of their teaching.

The education review team, however, mentions that “there are no quick solutions to achieving the proposed pedagogy and classroom assessment reforms. All teachers need to have increased motivation and capability. They will need to

become ongoing learners who are innovative, adaptive and reflective practitioners” (OECD/Asian Development Bank, 2015: 269).

Conclusion

Curriculum changes always bring challenges to all related education parties. Problems and difficulties will occur but the solutions for them can be always available if the teachers and the pupils work together, even for the student teachers and the institution where they study at. In this paper, there are three problems found in the teaching documents for the student teachers. They are problems in formulating the learning indicators, planning the teaching scenario using scientific approach and the planning the assessment. This paper also recommends some actions necessary to take. In addition, teaching is always an art. So there is actually not a fixed formula of how to have effective and successful teaching. By having a reflective teaching, teachers or student teachers will lead better class activities and achieve the teaching goals easily.

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